116, 175, 797

"Our previous knowledge of the Siriono, which is very scanty, dates from 1693, when they were first seen for a few days by Father Cyprian Barrace. (3) At that time the

3. All that is recorded of Father Barrace's contact with the Siriono is the following: 'It was not long before the holy man discovered another nation. After traveling some days he found himself amidst a people called the Cirionians. The instant these barbarians perceived the Father, they took up their arrows and prepared to shoot both at him and at the converts in his company, but Father Cyprian advanced up to them with so kind an aspect that their arrows dropped from their hands. He made some stay with them; and, by visiting their various settlements, discovered another nation called the Guarayans' (Lettres édifiantes. . . ., 1781, vol. 8. p. 105).

Siriono were occupying the deep forests in the southern part of the same region which they inhabit today. After first contact, and before their expulsion in 1767, the Jesuits probably made several attempts to missionize them. At any rate, in 1765 a few Siriono were coaxed into the mission of Buena Vista and were later transferred to the mission of Santa Rosa on the Rio Guaporé. So far as we know, no other attempt was made to missionize them until comparatively recent times. Of these endeavors most have failed,

not so much because of warlikeness, since this character has been falsely attributed to the Siriono, but because of their sensitivity to maltreatment and their adherence to nomadic life.

In 1927, decimated by smallpox and influenza, a small group of Siriono was settled at the Franciscan Mission of Santa María near the Rio San Miguel. This venture did not result in success. In 1941 I met many Indians in the forests between Tibaera and Yaguarú who had formerly been living in Santa María but who had reverted to a nomadic existence because of what they regarded as unsatisfactory conditions of life at the mission. In 1935 American evangelists founded a mission for the Siriono at the site of an old Mojo mound called Ibiato, some 60 miles east of Trinidad. By 1940 this mission had a population of about 60 Indians, but it, also, could not be called a successful undertaking, because of lack of funds and trained personnel."

1: Holmberg--63 [3] (1941-42) 1950 Siriono
116, 177, 186, 721, 797

"Attention should be called, however, to the fact that on occasions the Siriono have retaliated for outbreaks against them by others. While they seem rarely, if ever, to have responded to the attacks made upon them from the south by the so-called Yanaiguas, and from the north by the Baure, for the purpose of killing their men and capturing their women and children, they have sporadically killed whites and missionized Guarayos Indians (with bows and arrows), both in retaliation for killings and for the purpose of securing iron tools and food. The warlike reputation of the Siriono, in fact, seems to have grown up as a result of these few isolated and unorganized raids, which reached their peak during the last rubber boom (in the 1920's) when there was a large influx of rubber tappers into some of the areas occupied by them. The siringueros, whenever possible, ruthlessly murdered the Indians, who in turn occasionally retaliated by waylaying a rubber worker and dispatching him for his machetes and axes. But when the rubber boom ended in 1928, by which time the Siriono were probably in possession of an adequate supply of tools, most of the whites left the area and the raids stopped. Shortly thereafter peaceful contact was established by a few of the whites who remained in the region. Today the Siriono who wander in the vicinity of the Franciscan missions of Guarayos occasionally steal maize and manioc from the gardens adjoining them, but people are seldom killed as a result of these forays. Generally speaking, when the Guarayos have contacts with the Siriono, relations are cordial."

5: Radwan--292-293 T-3 (1928?) 1928 Siriono
116, 177, 609, 622, 797

The approachableness of the branch in the neighborhood of San Pablo is the work of missionary R. P. Albert Singer, prefect of the mission in Guarayos, who has lived many years in this forest area: On his [293] frequent expeditions through the marshy woods, he has become well known to the Siriono who have watched him from hiding-places. An arrow shot, which he received several years ago from a Siriono in ambush, bespeaks the dangers which he has endured.

In the year 1927, the existence of this group was menaced by a sickness similar to grippe, which also killed the man who was chief at that time. Then the influential warriors decided to choose Father Albert Singer as their chief. A delegation sought him out in the near-by mission and notified him of the vote. An understanding was possible for the speech of the Siriono and the Guarayos both stem from the Guarani language. Thanks to the work of the missionary, a new mission called Santa Maria is in a fair way to coming into existence, the first among the Siriono.

5: Radwan--296[2] T-3 (1928?) 1928 Siriono
116, 177, 797

It would be in the interest of Bolivia to welcome it, if the missionary were to lure more distantly wandering branches of Sirionos from the forest, to save and settle them and rear them up as self-respecting farmers. In the distant future—the railroad construction from Cochabamba to Santa Cruz is already under way—these forest areas will be cultivated and it will be pre-eminently cattle-raising, which requires broad free plains. Through this the hunting-grounds of the forest Indians are gradually being reduced to nought; and they themselves will be forced to live a miserable existence as serfs on the estates of the whites and to disappear as a people. Every one who truly has the well-being of the forest Indians at heart, will approve only the former development; for in the mission the native crafts and language and the majority of their habits and customs are kept.